**Have the Talk: Climate Conversation Worksheet**

*Adapted from ourclimateourfuture.org*

These are examples of questions and phrases to use when having a conversation about a sensitive topic like climate change. You do not have to use these as a script -- be yourself and communicate in a way that is authentic and comfortable to you! This follows the OARTAC format: Open, Ask, Reflect, Tell, Ask, Close.

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| **OARTAC** | **EXAMPLES** |
| **OPEN** How you open and set the tone for the conversation. Minimize distractions.  Make sure you agree on the ground rules after you get their consent. | **Note:** The key to initiating a conversation is that you are asking permission, rather than just springing it on them. Giving consent makes them a more willing participant.   * “Would it be alright if we talked a bit about the changes I have seen in our local climate?” * “Can I talk to you about what I’ve been working on in my free time?” * “I am worried about how our climate has been changing? Can we talk about it?”   Agree on ground rules.   * “Would it be alright to ignore texts, calls and TV during our conversation?” * “Can we turn off our phones and TV while we talk.” * “What do you think about powering down electronics during our talk?” |
| **ASK**  Ask open-ended questions to learn about them and understand their experience. (Not yes/no questions). | * “What comes to mind when you hear the words climate change?” * “What about our changing climate interests or concerns you most?” * “Have you been concerned about the flooding we are experiencing?” * “What’s something that worries you about our changing climate?” * “How do you feel about the latest news on climate change?” |
| **REFLECT**  Reflect back what you basically heard them say. Reflecting helps the other person know they have been heard and listened to. Please, do not tell the person they are wrong or right about what they said. Just re-state their position so it is clear you understand what they are thinking. | **Note:** Reflect back what you heard them say. It can be practically word for word! It may feel weird but reflecting helps the other person know they have been heard, which especially helps when you hear something that sounds like criticism or denial.  **Example:** “I don’t think I can do anything about climate change personally. It’s an issue the government/businesses/someone else has to solve. I feel so overwhelmed.”  **Possible Response**   * “I hear you saying you don’t feel that there is really anything you can do about it, so you feel overwhelmed. * “So, you’re saying you just feel overwhelmed right now, so you don’t think you can do anything?” * I hear you saying someone else has to address the problem because an individual can’t really make a difference?”   **Example:** “I hear from other experts the climate has always changed, and it’s not necessarily from humans.”  **Possible Response**   * “I hear you saying you think there isn’t consensus on the science, or that there are experts that say the climate has always been changing.” |
| **TELL/SHARE** Ask if you can tell something you’ve learned, are feeling, or are thinking about.  At this point, it is important to share your STORY. Not facts and figures.  This is where you share with them why you CARE about the issue. Remember, this is not the time to convince them they are wrong! | **Note:** Tell why you care about climate change. Keep it brief! Start by asking if you can share your thoughts now. For example:   * “If it’s ok, I’d like to share my thoughts with you and where I’m coming from.” * “Can I share with you a bit about what I have been learning/thinking about?”   **Continue:**  This is the time to share why you care about climate change. Make it as personal as possible. You will need to think, reflect and know this ahead of time. See worksheet for elements of sharing your story. |
| **ASK** Ask what they think about what you’ve said, as well as other open-ended questions to learn more about them. | * “How are you feeling about all this?” * “What do you think?” * “What do you agree or disagree with?” * “Can you say a little more about how you see things?” |
| **CLOSE** Close out the conversation in a respectful way that hopefully leaves them open to having more conversations. | * “It sounds like you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. That makes sense. I appreciate hearing your perspective.” * “I’ve felt \_\_\_\_\_ too.” * “I’m glad you told me about \_\_\_\_\_ . I didn’t know that about you.” * “I appreciate hearing your perspective, even if we don’t agree.” * “It means a lot to me that we can have these conversations.”   **Followed by:**   * “Would you be open to talking about this more at some point?” |